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THE HILL TRAILS

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH





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THE HILL TRAILS

A BOOK OF VERSE

BY

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH



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TO
MY MOTHER

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I wish to thank the editors of the publications listed below for their kindness in permitting me to republish from their columns such verse of mine as I cared to include in this volume. The list: *Munsey's Magazine*, *Ainslee's Magazine*, *Collier's Weekly*, *Smart Set*, *Lippincott's Magazine*, *National Magazine*, *Overland Monthly*, *The Delineator*, *New York Sun*, *Smith's Magazine*, *People's Home Journal*, *Ave Maria*, *Town Topics*, *New York Times*, *The Christian Advocate*, *Boston Transcript*, *Sunset Magazine*, *Holland's Magazine*, *The Churchman*, *The Independent*, *Christian Endeavor World*, *Sunday School Times*, *Farm and Home*, *Orange Judd Farmer*, *American Messenger*, *Epworth Herald*, *The Congregationalist*.

I also wish to express my appreciation of the interest readers have taken in the poems as they have appeared serially. That friendly interest is the sole reason for the appearance of "The Hill Trails."

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.

Edge O' Pines,
Ames Hill,
West Brattleboro,
Vermont.

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THE HILL TRAILS

THE SONG OF THE HILL TRAILS

QUIET runs the valley way
Where the river dreams,
And the winds go light along,
Weaving into tender song
Happy moods and themes;
Upward where from mountain heart
Breathe the stormy gales,
And the white-plumed torrents cry,
Plunging rocky barriers by,
Run the hilly trails.

Oh, the high trails, the hill trails
The sunny trails of brown,
Seeing first the sun arise
And last its going down!
Ever do they call the heart
With their windings far,
Luring feet to follow on
Where peak is friend with star!

Quiet runs life's valley way,
Gently for the feet,
But there vision fails the eyes
Looking to the narrow skies
Where mount and cloudland meet.
Only on the mountain path
Vision never fails;
Shimmering plains are far away,

And beauty lingers night and day
On the hilly trails.

Oh, the high trails, the hill trails,
Life's lofty trails await,
Mounting through the flaming dawn,
The pilgrim heart elate.
Glorious are the visions there,
Far the eye can see
Wonders of the years ago,
And of the years to be!

THE OPEN SEAS

“Sail with God the seas.”—*Emerson.*

A SHIP passed the harbor at night where the
tide-lulled boats were resting,
And turned to the open sea, the star-linked bil-
lows breasting;
A song came soft on the wind, over the dark
waves winging —
A song with a burthen sweet, as of sailors' far-
off singing.

“Break from thy moorings of age and despair,
Thou in the harbor sleeping!
Peace that is there is the peace of the dead;
Death with the years comes creeping.
Hail, thou who sleepest!
Awake!
Break from thy moorings and swing to the
breeze —
Come, sail with thy God the wide, open seas!

“Storms thou shalt meet that will temper thy
soul,
Ever thy heart's strength trying;
But far at the end are the gleam of the goal
And glories worth the dying!
Hail, thou who sleepest!
Awake!

Truth needs thy strength and thy life — heed
her pleas!

Come, sail with thy God the great, open
seas!"

A ship passed the harbor at night where the
silent boats were resting,

And turned to the outer sea, as if on a far
course keeping;

A song came soft on the wind, a call to strong
manhood bringing —

A song with a burthen sweet, over the dark
waves winging!

THE FOOLS

THEY wore on life's great stage the cap and bells,

And played a happy fool's low comic parts;
About them wailed the battle's solemn knells,
And lovers fought to win their maidens' hearts.

The tumult echoes far, the banners wave

No more with silken song o'er plumèd head,
No more in sounding charge the war-horns
rave,
And kingdoms mingle with the ancient dead.

The dusty pages tell the kingly tale

Of crowns and honors bartered for a kiss;
On tombs the sculptured praise begins to fail —
Death buries all from sight in night's abyss.

And who has wisdom now — the king or fool?

Which sweeter is — steel's clang or rolic
song?

From kings and conquerors of ages cruel

Time lifts the wreaths and crowns the motley
throng!

ALCHEMY

I HEAR the voice of evening on the hills,
 Like sound of pilgrim pipes on distant
 ways;
 Sweet from the misty meadows' silver haze
Brook answers brook with song, and childish
 rills
Are calling each to each. There night distills
 Her dews, and 'mid the rushes each pool
 lays
 Its chart of starry skies; there evening
 plays
Upon the trees a song that soothes and thrills.

At evening's summoning, what sprites arise,
 What pixies, fairies in the woodlands meet
 Of course cannot be known or even
 guessed,
For they no more are seen by profane eyes;
 But magic is abroad and fays discreet,
 When common ways with twilight's charm
 are dressed!

HEIGHT AND HEARTH

Thy pace I cannot keep,
The hills are cold;
Far down the home lights gleam
By barn and fold.

Thy eager feet can mount
Fame's star-led way,
Mine for the meadows long,
The common day.

Speed thou — the gleaming heights
With cheer essay!
I at my cottage door
Will watch and pray.

KINSHIP

AFAR from gleaming streets, when night had
thrown

Her magic mantle o'er the countryside,
I stood upon a hill with vision wide,
And saw the meadows of the night with star
bloom sown;

The winds seemed winging by soft music blown
From cosmic choirs; I felt the voiceless tide
From dark eternal deeps around me glide:
I stood with alien things of dusk, alone.

Chill with the ancient fear of night and star,
The brooding form that walks the aisles of
eve,

The silence dread that seems about to
speak,
I turned where shining streets and loved ones
are,

And joyed like one who suddenly might leave
With homeward thought some still, gray,
northern peak!

TWILIGHT

A WILD rose red aflame on the hills
Whence the weary day has flown,
A rush of night down the wooded steeps —
The sunset rose has blown.

Here in the valley gray and still
Go our dreams on their nightly quest —
O that over the hills had gone
The thoughts that never rest!

WINDS OF YESTERDAY

OVER the hills you fled from me,
Oh, winds of yesterday!
Bearing from me so much I loved,
Oh, winds of yesterday —

A bit of the golden dust of youth,
Blowing it far with careless ruth;
The laugh of a friend, a low, sweet song
Sung when the shadows lingered long;
A hope that died with the setting sun,
A dream that waned when day was done —

These and a thousand loved things more
You took from my life for evermore;
And never a prayer that priests can frame,
Never a charm that lips can name,
Never the yearnings of worlds of men,
Can bring them back to me again!

Yet if you come no more to me,
Oh, winds of yesterday,
Out of the shadowy hills of the past,
Oh, winds of yesterday —

I'll treasure the dust that still remains,
Shield it from loss and darksome stains;
The friendly voice with its cheery thrill
Shall speak with the old loved accents still;

The strain of the song that fled away
My heart shall recall at the close of day.

The hope that died I shall ne'er regret,
For hopes must die and hearts forget;
The dream that waned in the bright day's glare
Remembered still leads me to do and dare.
Life is calling forever great deeds to perform,
Love waits still to guide me through shadow
and storm;

I follow you not on your far hill way —
Farewell, ye winds of yesterday!

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THE VISITOR

SOME ONE down the city street
Passed unseen, on soundless feet.
Who it was I do not know,
But I saw worn faces glow,
And I saw dim eyes grow bright
With a rapturous delight;
Sweeter came the children's laughter;
Longer echoed it thereafter.
Some one came and went along
Through the wide street's crowded throng.

In the forest, far away,
Some one crept at close of day,
Folded softly wing on wing—
A wind of spring!

THE HILLS OF ENCHANTMENT

HIGH o'er the sunset's splendor, long ago,
Piled on the flaming clouds, I saw them shine;
Their peaks, agleam with golden light divine,
Plunged in the starry tides' unceasing flow.
They are, I thought, beyond our earth's deep
woe;

Their circling heights Avilion confine,
And Arthur's home which meadows deep en-
shrine,
Where hail falls not and winds are ever low.

Long did I dream — O might I find the way,
Look once ere death and see those meadows
gleam,

Hear winds and brooks that have no sound
save song!

Then, thought I, foolish heart, thy yearning
stay:

From those far hills thine own of beauty
seem,

And there for thine some restless heart
may long!

HUMANITY

DEEP answers deep along that gloomy shore;
Far out ships hail, then pass and speak no
more.

Only the great lights on the headlands burn;
Truth, right, and peace — toward these the
ages yearn.

IF HEARTS WERE CANDLES

If hearts were candles
Shining through the night,
I wonder would I see
One tender light? —

One candle gleaming
Brightly out to me,
To turn my footsteps homeward —
And to thee!

VOYAGERS

A HARBOR there is where the ships go out —
 Frail little ships they are —
With white sails poised to the kiss of the wind
 Over the gleaming bar.

Over the great wide world they go,
 Breasting the foaming tides,
Until they rest in the havens afar
 Where the dark storm never strides.

Some never return from their distant quest —
 Lost, and none knows where —
And the years go by, but never again
 Over the seas they fare.

And where is the harbor whence they sail
 Under the blue above?
The harbor is found in the hearts of men;
 The ships are their words of love.

THE HOME LIGHTS

O TENDER lights afar that call us home,
Across the darkened miles how bright you
burn!
As if beseeching wandering feet no more to
roam,
But back among the old scenes to return.

Not all of us would walk life's homeland ways,
Far o'er the hills the Unseen calls the heart;
Youth hears the summons sweet, and no more
stays
To play in lowly fields a humble part.

And love in vain may long to hold the feet
That yearn to tread the white road o'er the
hills
Which runs to meet the stars with windings fleet,
Far from the valleys where man sows and
tills.

But evermore the gentle lights shall burn
In ceaseless watching for the hearts that
roam,
And we who at gray even homeward yearn
Shall smile through tears and bless the lights
of home.

AN OLD INN

A PATRIARCH asleep
Beneath the drowsy elms,
Calm in the old content
Of other centuries —
What tales of merry hours his lips could tell,
Of cronies old, of wistful face from far,
Of beggar filled, of birthnight and burial morn,
Of shy, coquettish, passing eyes — closed, ah,
 for many years;
What tales — as one might speak
In reverie, tenderly, brokenly,
Of vanished things, with pauses, halting
For recalling and a bit of
Dreaming; if he might wake and speak
What happy hours —
But he shall waken
Never!

THE FROLIC WIND

THE wind laughed down the valley,
And sang to the whispering trees;
It kissed the flowers rudely,
And tumbled the laden bees.

It played with a maiden's ringlets,
It startled a drowsy fire,
And wrought by a dreaming river
The reeds in a low-tuned lyre.

It stole from a flowery garden
A burden of sweet perfume,
And scattered the scent of the roses
About in a dark sick-room.

It paused on a city corner,
And tugged at the passers-by;
It crept in a chimney corner,
And moaned as a ghost would sigh.

With joyous hands it pummeled
A noisy window-pane,
And shook a swinging shutter
With all its might and main.

It bent o'er a weary workman
Where he toiled in a sultry place,

And, pursing its lips with coolness,
Blew soft on his heated face.

It stopped where a bird was singing,
And, catching the lilt of the song,
Bore it to one in anguish,
Who smiled and listened long.

At last, when the day was dying,
It fled down the golden west,
And far beyond the mountains
Sank to its evening rest.

STORM

THE lightning's lances flaming o'er earth's rim
Crashed and splintered on the mountain's
shield;

The gray-plumed troopers of the rain on field
And wood swept after, leaving, stark and dim,
The sodden miles; ranked, dark and grim,

The clouds' battalions down the gray steeps
reeled

Like foam-tipped flood; on peaks the priest
winds kneeled,

In mighty tone arose the battle hymn.

Day fled before the downward plunging horde
And earth resounded with their thundering
feet,

In mounting tides they tossed and whirled
and spun;

Then o'er the eastern hills a radiance poured;
The storm's black squadrons turned in wild
retreat

Before the golden armies of the sun!

THE LEGEND OF THE FADELESS ROSE

IN Spain the elders tell the legend o'er
To listeners about the rose-hung door.

Once in a castle dwelt two lords of old,
One kind of heart, the other cruel, cold.

One eve the warder came who guards the gates,
And said: "A figure at the portal waits.

"It would not enter in, but bids me say
That it would speak with you without delay."

Then cried the baron dark: "Swift shall I go!
This begging one strength of my arm shall
know!"

Returning later, answered he: "I smote
A beggar bold, and cast him in the moat!"

The warder came again with cringing mien —
"A figure at the outer gate is seen."

"This time I go," the gentle knight replied,
"Such nights as these worn travelers have
died."

Returning in his hand a rose he held
From whose white heart a wondrous perfume
welled.

He said: "I saw a maiden at the door;
She vanished in the storm-wind's gusty roar.

"This rose she gave me which her bosom bore,
And said that it would bloom for evermore."

And even now, some say, the white rose blooms
With beauty shining in the dim, gray rooms.

Its perfume brings to men glad dreams of
spring,
The song of birds, the low wind's murmuring.

A meaning in the legend many find:
Fair gifts has life for those whose hearts are
kind.

THE ANCIENT CALL

THE wind is a hale old fellow,
A gypsy and vagabond;
He's wandered the world all over,
And even a little beyond.

He bends to the youth in the meadow,
Dreaming of lands that lie
Fairer than hill and valley
Under his homeland sky.

He bends to the youth, and he voices
A lure that is ever strong;
Fellowship true and promise,
He weaves in a weft of song.

“Heigh-ho, laddie, would you wonders see?
Then a happy rover must you be!
Drop your plow and harrow, leave this life so
narrow,
And come along — just come along with me!”

He stoops to the lad in the city,
Dreaming of hills afar,
Where God's great winds blow nightly,
And golden is every star.

He stoops, and he sings so softly,
His voice is like meadow streams,

But ever one thought threads lightly,
The lilt of his wayward themes:

“Heigh-ho, laddie, would you wonders see?
Take with me the hill ways, far and free!
Far away we'll follow April and the swallow!
Come along — just come along with me!”

The wind is a hale old fellow,
But the heart within his breast
Beats in common with the throbbing
Of youth's longing and unrest.

So he called the young hearts vanished
Long ago in ages dim,
And he calls them now as gayly
To up and follow him!

THE COMMON WAYS

THE little waves of Galilee
Now touch all human shores,
The little ways of Nazareth
Run to all earthly doors.

The peace He found one quiet eve
Among the olives gray
We find who walk our garden aisles
At hushing of the day.

In silent rooms of prayer we know
What lonely watch must be
Ere we can leave with soul serene
Our dim Gethsemane.

The shadowed hill of Calvary
On every life looks down,
And we go up like Him to win
The Cross — and then the Crown!

THE INN

THERE weary travelers lay their burdens down,
Nor ever rise to take them up with morn;
There saint and sinner rest, the sage, the
clown;
There hushed are voice of praise and voice of
scorn.

Down corridors that never sound with din,
Where enter winds that from all singing
cease,
An angel moves; if asked by venturers in
What sought the sleepers there, she answers,
“Peace.”

WHEN EVENING LIKE AN ANGEL

WHEN evening like an angel walks
The dim old village street,
And children's homing voices die,
In echoes far and sweet,

I watch the home lights softly glow
Between the archèd trees
Like lights of love along life's way
Or by its chartless seas;

I hear low greetings in the dusk,
The word of friend to friend,
The tender phrase of one who meets
A love at journey's end;

And o'er the village hearths and homes
In fancy I can see
The angel of the evening speak
A benedicite!

THE CHERISHED

HER home was quaint and quiet,
Some distance from the street,
And o'er it vines ran riot,
Around were flowers sweet.

The older people called her
"A spinster" in a way
That made it seem a sad thing
To be alone and gray.

But one wee lad who loved her
(Her sugar cookies, too)
Thought God had made his spinsters
In number all too few!

THE BATTLEFIELD

HERE where hell triumphed for a crimson day,
And rose the cries that still must echo far
Amid the spaces linking star with star,
Sunshine and shadow keep a love-tryst gay.
Wood-winds, from forest aisles, with light
touch sway
Shy meadow flowers; where tangled thickets
are,
Bright wings glint goldenly; and from her
jar
Of silver, Summer blows sweet scents away.

No sign is here of that dread battle-ground,
So well the grass has woven through brief
years
Its kindly shroud, and Summer spent its
gold:
Within this peace, so tender and profound,
How hollow seem the victor's boastful cheers
And fame of conquerors in ages old!

LONGING

Just a bit of longing for an absent face —
How it brings the shadows in a sunny place!

Just a bit of longing for a happy voice,
And the heart finds nothing making it rejoice.

Just a bit of longing for a roguish smile
Makes the day seem longer, lengthens every
mile.

Just a bit of longing for a footstep's sound
Keeps the heart alistening to the footsteps
'round.

Just a bit of longing makes love seem far more,
When, the parting ended — love meets us at
the door!

THE CROSS

SYMBOL of shame for years beyond our count,
Its form became upon the shadowed mount
Symbol of love, of faith, of hope and cheer,
That holier grows through every human year.

But not the cross alone, for life as well
Is now for us a holy miracle,
And all its darker, meaner moments share
Some of the beauty Christ brings everywhere.

DAY'S CLOSE

“FAREWELL,” the wind sang through the garden,
den,

Loath to leave his loved ones there;

“Good-night,” the flowers answered;
sweetly

Rose their whispers on the air.

“Good-by,” the harpist fountain

Played upon his silver strings,

And the tinkling notes fell lightly

Where the rose-vine sways and swings.

“All the night calm be thy slumber,”

Murmured far the meadow streams,

Their low, lingering accents mingling;

And the thrush replied, “Sweet dreams!”

THE SECRET

O, LITTLE bird, you sing
As if all months were June;
Pray tell me ere you go
The secret of your tune?

“ I have no hidden word
To tell, nor mystic art;
I only know I sing
The song within my heart! ”

THE WELLS OF SLEEP

THE wells of sleep are in a sunset land
Where purple shadows hedge the low-hung
trees,
Where all is still from stir or song or speech,
And never leaves move with a restless breeze.

When day is done each human heart waits there
The silver cup that bears the draught of
sleep,
And brings a peace that soothes and comforts
fair
While through the night the cool gray
shadows creep.

The heart grows weary with the setting sun,
The feet must weary on the paths of day:
No greater gift the Master gave to earth —
The wells of sleep where burdens slip away.

A SON OF PAN

IN Roman woods the nightingale,
In English lanes the lark,
But in my own New England vale
The minstrel robin — hark!

How quaintly from the apple tree
He sounds his clear-toned flute;
He little cares if all the world
Around is hushed and mute.

A brother, he, to troubadours
And singers long ago;
A comrade hail on any trail
Through sunshine, rain or blow.

Sweet in the dusks of Italy
May sing the nightingale;
In English lanes the happy lark
When hawthorns bud and pale.

But never there does search reveal
To longing eyes of man
A true descendant, pure of blood,
To claim the wreath of Pan.

When spring bloom dims New England hills,
An exile though he seems,
You hear him pipe in merry mood
The cheery old wood-dreams!

TO ONE GROWN OLD

So softly have thy years come unto thee,
I can not think of them but as the snow
With muffled step — when Autumn's leaves
are low —

That steals o'er field and woodland silently.
From all regret and longing thou art free;
Thy Springtime's rain ne'er dimmed the sun-
light's glow;

Thy Autumn was serene, yet thou didst know
The certain sorrows of humanity.

Thy Winter is not that of chill and storm,
Of grieving winds and dark sky overcast,
Of stricken brook the shrouding snowdrift
hides;

But rather that of hearth side, bright and
warm,

Of friendships growing sweeter to the last,
Because within thy heart the Spring
abides.

AUTUMN

No more the cricket's quiet mirth
 Sounds from his grassy door,
Or speaks the distant whippoorwill
 His admonition o'er.

The autumn songs are tender songs,
 But with low minor strains
That seem to breathe of long farewells,
 Of mists and moaning rains.

We vow that we will merry be,
 And fill the days with cheer,
But springtime songs seem somehow false
 With autumn's quiet here.

These are the days when hearts draw near,
 And love comes close to keep
The tender blossoms of the soul
 From lifelong winter sleep.

So while the gay, glad summer throngs
 To silence deep return,
Our souls shall swing their portals wide,
 And bright our hearths shall burn!

THE HILLS IN ABSENCE

THERE'S the song of a storm on the old hill
trails,

And the lure of a vanished day ;

There's the sound of the waves that are never
still,

As they roll on the open bay.

There's the white, still hush of the waiting
woods,

And the call of the deer at eve,

And the sough of the pines that forever tell

Why the ancient oceans grieve.

There's the camp-fire's gleam on the dusky
trees,

There's a pipe and a bit of song,

While the stars above through the branches
smile,

And the big moon dreams along.

And here are the streets with their hordes of
men

That the gleam of the gold pursue ;

Oh, give me the gold on the pines at dusk —

My hills, how I long for you!

THE HIDDEN GATE

THERE is a gateway o'er which trees
Unlifting shadows throw,
Where down the gently moving breeze
Forever roses blow.

About it creep gray vines that hide
A carven symbol there,
And underneath the leaves abide
Shy pilgrims of the air.

High grows the grass whose whispering
Is ever grave and low,
Who don the dews' bright glistening
When cool the wood-winds blow.

The symbol carved is "Youth," my dear,
The gate the vines o'ergrow
Leads gently down through many a year
To youth's bright long ago.

It opens on a garden fair —
The Garden sweet of Dreams,
Where wind-blown bloom perfumes the air,
And songs have happy streams.

O let us once more swing the gate,
The Garden's beauty know!
But vain he seeks returning late
The Golden Long Ago.

MEMORIES

LIKE fragrance blown from garden aisles
Of roses after rain,
Sweet through the windows of the heart
Loved memories drift again.

Like magic borne from twilight flutes
Through evening's starry door,
Or song of thrush from woodland dusk,
Loved voices speak once more.

Like that sweet touch of twilight's lips
The drowsy flowers know,
We feel again the tender kiss
That hushed us long ago.

Oh, summer night, you summon back
From lost and vanished years
The music stilled, the dreams forgot,
The laughter and the tears!

AN OLD CHURCH

HERE hollowed steps and shining woodwork
show

The passing feet and touch of long ago;
And vain all search though sent the wide world
o'er

To seek the feet that walk these aisles no more.

Yet here the childish hands took hold on things
Whose strength outlasts the ancient might of
kings;

Here footsteps, wavering with the years,
Have climbed to peace beyond the Vale of Tears.

Around the ivied walls the drifting years are
piled,

And fading leaves are blown where summer
smiled;

Dreams of a day — elsewhere such thought may
come;

Here Christ has touched doubt's lips and made
them dumb!

DUSK AND DAWN

So softly came the dusk,
When night met day,
No eye could see the light
Fade to shadows gray.

Upon earth's weary eyes
The twilight gently fell,
And brought the hush of peace
Ineffable.

So softly comes death's sleep
With life's release,
No heart shall ever know
When it finds peace;

But as beyond the night
There waits the dawn,
So shall we wake, and find —
The shadows gone!

SPRING RAIN

GRAY and misty is the rain
Down the quiet, winding lane;
 The pools look up,
 Each with a cup
Held for the sunshine, but in vain.

Chilly seems the windless air;
Dampness lingers everywhere,
 Though bright within
 The fire-elfs spin,
Ere up the chimney's dark they fare.

Memories of vanished years,
Laughter stilled, forgotten tears —
 These come when rain
 Beats on the pane,
And dusk from western valley nears.

But hark! Adown the misty lane
Ripples a merry, mirthful strain!
 Our hearts find cheer,
 For there we hear
A robin chuckling in the rain!

THE ANGEL OF THE TWILIGHT

WHEN roads of earth grow dusky with the
 night,
And home lights gleam in vale and on dim
 height;
When altars of the west from flaming cease
And from their songs the winds of day find
 peace;
The angel of the twilight comes from deeps un-
 known
Where beacon-light of stars is never thrown.

On country roads where winking windows smile,
Through glowing city streets where mile on
 mile
The night is fringed with fire, through forest
 deep
And woodland aisle in slumber calm asleep,
Beyond the last far lingering light of day
That fades among the stars, she makes her way.

The haunts of men she enters, cottage small,
The shepherd's hut, the princely castle hall,
With step so light none heeds her drawing near,
With face so fair, if seen, no heart would fear;
In all so like a mother, on her breast,
The weary heart could find a perfect rest.

Beneath her touch the restless hands grow still,
Beneath her kiss the hurt finds balm for ill ;
She breathes upon the tired eyes of grief,
And slow they close in slumber's sweet relief ;
In tender arms she bears hearts wounded sore
Where hate can scar and failure bruise no more.

So comes the twilight angel when the rose
Of day is ash in western garden close ;
She comes to all yet none has seen her face,
Though all have slumbered, hushed in her embrace :
No more than this we know at dawn of light :
She came, a lovely visitant of night !

VESPERS

AROUND the dusky brow of night
'The sunset bound a fillet bright,
And like a priestess at a pyre,
She knelt beside the altar fire.

From dim cathedrals of the hills
The mingled chant of winds and rills
Rose softly on the evening air,
The solemn vesper rites to share.

Slow died the altar's flame of gold;
The face of night, bright aureoled,
In shadow dimmed, as, kneeling low,
She watched the embers' fading glow.

The chanting winds grew still; the brooks
Fell silent in the forest nooks;
And down the world's vast aisles night went
With folded arms and soul content!

ASSURANCE

A THOUSAND shining days shall flow
Across the dawn's pearl bars;
A thousand nights shall come and go
With splendor of the stars.

And one shall bear you far away,
As dreams bear one in sleep,
Beyond the utmost verge of day,
Beyond the sunset-deep.

Dread not the parting that must be;
Yours is no journey new;
Hearts go that way eternally,
And I shall follow you!

AS THE YEARS PASS

COME softly, years, though be your coming
swift,

That thinking not of you life's way I go,
Glad for the sun, the rain, love's precious
gift —

Then, sudden, find the hills are white with
snow!

REUNION

WITHIN the murmuring river
The singing brooks are free,
And rivers rest forever
In the quiet of the sea.

Each cloud from silver chalice
Gives back to earth the rain;
Paths go from hut and palace,
But each returns again.

A pilgrim westward wending
Toward the setting sun
Finds at his journey's ending
The dawn and sunset one.

Unto the broken-hearted
Such thought is ever sweet:
Though love from love be parted,
Love with love shall meet!

THE BROTHERHOOD

THAT some hurts lie too deep for balm of tears,
Each heart knows well, or will as speed the
years.

Each joins the silent brotherhood who wear
No cross, nor gray monastic pallet share,

But who, by gentle deed and touch of hand,
Show that they are of those who understand.

No balm there is to heal — and yet how sweet
The quiet word, the fingers' pressure fleet!

POWER

How pitiful seem all the burdened years,
 How mean the might of all things gross and
 base,
How empty all the future's formless fears,
 Before the smiling of one brave, strong face!

A QUESTION

If I take the path to song
And you take the road to gold,
I wonder if we shall meet
When the years are old?

If I bear a harp with me
And you have a golden scale,
I wonder if one shall win —
Or if both shall fail?

Over my path there go
Pilgrims but now and then;
Over your road there tread
A million men.

Perhaps, it is wise and best
Our pathways should wander far,
Yours where toil's thunders rise,
Mine where the thrushes are.

I wonder if I with a harp
And you with a bag of gold
Will meet on the way of peace
When the years are old?

I wonder if we shall speak
With the oldtime friendliness?
If the Inn at the journey's end
Is —“ Happiness ”?

IN AFTER YEARS

How often in the after years when time
Has touched us whitely with his frosty rime,
In silent moments never spoken of,
We long to know again a mother's love.

Bright gold, hard labor's guerdon, may be ours,
And fame have brought us satisfying dowers,
Yet in the moment when our life has all —
All would we give to hear her gently call.

When fevered with the fret of life and toil,
The strife of living, and the day's turmoil,
How do we yearn, so deeply and so much,
To feel again the healing of her touch.

When bitter in defeat, by failure stung,
When from the heart, hot, careless words are
 flung,
How thought brings back, our dark moods to
 beguile,
The pleased, reproving laughter in her smile!

Ah, mothers, little do you know or guess
How in our secret hearts your name we bless;
How you are present through life's joys and
 tears,
Forgotten not through life's increasing years!

TEACHERS

THE little brook that down the vale
Sings on though days be bright or gray
Has taught me how I, too, may sing
My cares and griefs away.

The flowers growing by the path
With faces lifted to the sky
Have taught me where to look for Him
Whose truth I journey by.

The roadside spring whose waters well
To quench the thirst of man
Has taught me how my life may be
Of service in God's plan.

And so it is where'er I go,
Whate'er I hear or see;
The humblest dwellers of the earth
Are always teaching me!

THOSE WHO ANSWER NOT

I WONDERED why some loved one did not speak
Across the silent void that we call death,
But I have learned. From on a wooded peak
I called far down to one, till spent was breath,
Who answered not nor looked, though joyously
Would he have hurled a merry, ringing word
To my far seat with greeting cheerily,
Could he, within the rocky vale, have heard.
I watched him pass beyond my longing sight,
Nor deem me waiting on the mountainside;
So those who watch from death's far, upper
height

Can reach us not who on earth's plains abide:
Theirs is the wish to call with friendly cheer;
Ours is the silence deep — we cannot hear!

IN ANSWER

SHALL I remember you? When hearts
Forget to ache, and nevermore
Lips rest on lips ere Love departs
Beyond the opened door:

When at the window of the years
No more eyes backward look to see
Love enter in the vale of tears
That fronts eternity:

When 'mid the tread of countless feet,
The heart no more shall wait to hear
Familiar steps, nor start to greet
The face no longer near:

When memory has gone from men,
And all the dreams of joys they knew
And hope of joys to come, say, then —
I have forgotten you!

THE DIALS

WITH fingers softer than the touch of death
The sundial writes the passing of the day,
The hours unfolding slow to twilight gray,
The gleaming moments vanished in a breath.

But sunny hours alone the sundial names ;
All unrecorded are the midnight spans
And vain within the dusk the watcher scans
The marble face ; thereon no record flames.

So on eternal dials that God may hold,
And those more humble in the human heart,
No bitter deeds their passing hours impart ;
Kind deeds alone are marked in fadeless gold !

LILACS OF MEMORY

It never seems that spring has come
 Until my lilacs bloom,
And shy winds bear within the house
 The drifting wraith-perfume.

I never know until I scent
 Its spirit in the place
That I shall bend no more to kiss
 One gentle flower-face.

For long ago when lilacs dreamed
 In bloom beside the door,
Spring took her far beyond the hills,
 And brings her back no more!

THE SEASON'S END

Now rounds the apple on the bough,
And glows the aster by the road,
The birds have left the graying nest,
The milkweeds scattered far their load,
At twilight, redder burns the sun —
Ah, lad, the trysting time is done.

The autumn fires in spirals slow
Mount up like incense to the sky,
The locust plays his failing fife,
The brook in muffling robe goes by,
The thrush at twilight sings no more —
Ah, lad, the mating time is o'er.

The leaves put on a raiment bold
For final revels of the year,
The fading beauty of the hills
Wanes to a grayness, dim and drear,
The winds go by with presage cold —
Ah, lad, 'tis love that grows not old!

THE MASQUERADER

A GRAY form flitted from the quiet wood ;

I wondered what the vagabond could bring ;
Then as the gay wind lifted high the hood —

I saw the dimpled, laughing face of Spring !

I knew not what she hid beneath her cloak,

As on she tripped with swift-blown kiss to me,
But everywhere the dreaming blossoms woke,
And winds were glad with summer's prophecy.

EVENING RAIN

As gentle as the voice of love
 Low-speaking in the eve,
As tender as the word of love
 To wistful hearts that grieve,

The murmuring evening rain I hear
 Beyond my open door;
And in my heart its summoning
 Brings memories of yore.

The drifting scent of fading rose
 Within my garden walls
Upon the warm and whispering air
 Like some sweet incense falls.

The light wind bears it to my room,
 And like a charm it brings
The rapture of dear days ago,
 The joy of vanished springs.

Oh, ministry of twilight hours,
 No holier balm for pain,
No richer gift of peace you have
 Than breath of evening rain!

A FOOTNOTE

AGE glancing through his tattered book of life
Reread the fading notes that told of strife
And peace, regret and hope, forever past,
And underneath them all he wrote this last —
The rich reward of life's long journeying,
The comfort that the years alone can bring:
“Where once I wept, I smile.”

THE FULL LIFE

UNTIL one knows how keen the hurt
Of failure after strife may be;
Until one takes with humble heart
The meeds of victory;

Until one learns with unreserve
To give up what is greatly dear;
Until one learns that weight of worth
Is not in length of year;

Until one looks upon the face
Of one who speaks to him no more;
Until one knocks with bruised hand
Upon a fast-closed door;

Until one sees in every day
Eternity is schemed;
He has not found the good of life —
He has not lived but dreamed!

IN THE ANGEL'S BOOK

I do not hope to find beneath my name
The sounding syllables of an earthly fame
But just a little friendly word or two
To show that you loved me and I loved you!

IN A TWILIGHT GARDEN

Who walks a garden aisle at hush of eve,
When winds of day are still, and everywhere
The dreaming shadows rest, can well believe
The flowers have an evening hour of prayer.

When round the heart the restful silence folds,
And life's tumultuous turmoil throbs no more,
It seems as if the friendly twilight holds
A healing Presence worn souls hunger for.

One in the garden's dusky peace can guess
Why Jesus longed one starlit night to be
Far from the restless city's din and press,
Within the quiet of Gethsemane.

THE WIND'S INVITATION

LEAVE thy work and follow, lad;
The spring is in the air;
Adown the ways a laughter plays —
Up and on we fare.

Music from the meadows
Where the brooks awake —
There is healing, laddie,
For an old heartache!

Hush! the trees are telling
Dreams of winter long —
Hark! that voice ethereal
Wraps the world with song.

Up, away, and caring
Not for any fate;
At the end of faring
Love is at the gate.

Up and follow, laddie,
Arm and arm with mirth;
Farewell to winter's sorrow —
The spring has come to earth!

THE FIRST SORROW

By this, O grieving heart, you enter in
A brotherhood as ancient as the stars,
Immortal as the grief that David knew,
And limitless as are the dreams of men.

By this you enter in to mysteries
Which only those who suffer know; all life
Shall have new meanings rich with truth,
And you shall see not darkly as before.

There is no bond like sorrow in the world
To knit the hearts of men in common good;
Above their dead the foemen are as friends,
And grief beside the ashes turns to love.

By this are you made kin in holy rite
To greatest of the earth and lowliest;
Forevermore you share their hope and faith,
And in that sharing shall your soul find peace.

WITHOUT THEE

WHEN whitely blooms the rose of morn
In gardens of the sky,
And gay with laughter of the birds
The lyric winds go by,
I often think how dull would be
The morning without thee!

When noon has swept the hills with gold
And tinted bright the trees,
When in their leafy tents the birds
Have hushed their minstrel glees,
I think how gray and lone would be
The noontide without thee!

When evening calls the thrushes' choir
For vesper service sweet,
And from the clangor of the day
Hearts find a calm retreat,
I know how void of rest would be
A twilight without thee!

You are to me the morning's joy,
The noontide's sunny beam,
The twilight's friendly hand of peace,
And ever do I dream
How great my need of you will be
Through time's eternity!

SUNSET FROM A CITY TOWER

A MOTE between the soaring skies and earth,
I peer into the deep abyss below,
Where sweeps a tide that hath nor ebb nor
flow

With murmur as of devils' distant mirth.
In its great womb a thousand sounds have birth,
Merged in one mighty chant, confused and
low;

Far down the lights burn with a dull red glow
Like deep-gloomed forges set in night's black
girth.

Then Fancy stoops to Thought: I think of all
The souls that whirl fore'er on that great
tide,

The face of youth, of sin, of peace, of
years;

There Death walks nightly when the shadows
fall,

There Love keeps watch some one beloved be-
side.

There sorrow follows joy, and laughter,
tears.

Then turning toward the far, dark-hooded west,
With thoughts full of life's strange unrest
and woe,

I saw the darkened heavens burst — and lo!

As with great hands the clouds apart were
pressed —
Forth leaped the sunset on its evening quest!
Wide as the great earth's verge its bright
tides flow,
With crimson fire the city skylines glow,
While chimes are singing hymns of peace and
rest,
So shall we leave earth's fevered winding ways,
Its dark dim paths where surest footsteps
fail,
And some day see the darkness part and
bare
The towered heights of Paradise ablaze,
While sweetly ringing bells our coming hail,
And stands the Master with his welcome
there!

A SONG OF THE ROAD

Ho, for the voice of the winds,
 Calling the freeborn far,
O'er the crest of the earth to a kingly birth,
 Friends with the northern star!

Ho, for the sunny world,
 Blossom and bird and bee,
For the song of the streams, the cool night
 dreams,
 The lure of the sky-rimmed sea!

Ho, for the red of the blood,
 Stirring the restless heart,
For the brave who would stray o'er the world's
 great way
 Down where the dawn tides start!

Ho, for the voice of the road,
 Calling the pilgrim far,
O'er the crest of the earth to a kingly birth,
 Friends with the northern star!

GENESIS

Out of the silence, song;
 Out of the bud, a rose;
Out of the rose, the scent
 The wood-wind blows.

Out of the years, a faith;
 Out of life's travail, truth;
Out of the heart, the charm
 Of ageless youth.

Out of the things unseen,
 Out of the inner dream,
Ever in beauty is born
 The love supreme!

THE WAGER

EL SHAMAR was a builder
Of fame long years ago;
Ar Hamel was a poet
Of whom we little know.

But once, a legend has it,
Shamar stood and smiled
Before a palace golden
Which he had reared and styled.

“ Ar Hamel, I’m a builder,
And you a singer — say,
You write a song; I’ll wager
Your song first fades away! ”

Ar Hamel wrote a love song;
A fragile thing it seemed
Beside the palace golden
That in the sunshine gleamed.

But when the lofty palace
Had crumbled into dust,
And on the wind was dancing,
The plaything of each gust;

When Shamar long had vanished,
Forgotten was his name,
When Hamel, happy-hearted,
Was known no more to fame;

Still in that land the love song
Was sung by lovers true:
The love song was immortal,
Its theme forever new!

IN AN OLD GARDEN FORGOTTEN

HERE even sunbeams stumble as they thread
The tangled aisles where weed and thicket
twine

In clasps unriven by the years; here vine
With vine weaves shrouds to hide the ghostly
dead

Of vanished springs. Here dying roses shed
Their petals, drifting memories that shrine
With fleeting glory of a garland fine,
A haunt whence one might think all beauty fled.

Yet here among this riot wild of bloom
And leaf, where Summer heaps the refuse of
Her toil, and shadow close to shadow
clings,

A vesper thrush amid the thickets' gloom
Makes sweet the night — a symbol of the
love

That dwells among the heart's forgotten
things!

OLD PORTS

I LOVE to wander in the dim old ways
Where seamen came from countries far and
wide;
The sleepy wharves redolent with the tide,
The battered ships, gray veterans of grim
frays,
An ancient sailor's yarns or salty lays —
They lure me ever to the blue seaside,
For there I find my dull thoughts vivified
With musing in the dreams of other days.

There is a beauty in the oldtime things
That men have touched and loved, which
served their need,
Yet which they leave when sailing days are
done;
Around old ports the loving fancy flings
A charm that wakens vanished life and deed,
And brings back days of glories lost and
won.

THE SUNSET ISLES

STILL are the towered isles beneath the sunset's
smile

That lulls the earth with benediction's holy
peace,
And bids the soul's gray chapel close a little
while

From din of life and wrangling tongues that
will not cease.

The star-gemmed ripples whisper round the
dark shore stones

With accents tender as a mother's good night
tune ;

The priestlike winds to music hush the far sea
moans,

And soothe the breakers' sullen mutter to a
croon.

The winding walks beneath the trees that bend
with bloom,

Like veiled nuns in white who fear men's pry-
ing eyes,

Are still and sweet with scented shadows but
no gloom,

And here and there the silver spraying foun-
tains rise.

There down the twilight aisles the happy lovers
stroll,
With woven arms and hearts merged deep in
love's accord;
There laughter like a cloud-borne lark springs
from the soul,
And to the yearning arms of grief joy is re-
stored.

Soft voices speak in mellow murmurs through
the dusk,
And seem like half-forgotten music heard
again,
But reft from low mortality's crude earthen
husk
That stills the finer strains born in the souls
of men.

The dark-eyed, mystic dreamers know not where
they lie,
Those happy sunset isles forever smiling fair,
But sometimes through our broken dreams we
see them nigh,—
And pray that we, when toil is done, may
enter there.

NIGHT AND THE AGES

DUSK with a charm has lulled
The noisy world to sleep;
Only the stars keep watch,
And the never-resting deep.

Think of the countless years
That night has come to men,
Going they knew not where,
Nor if it came again!

Over the sparkling blue
Of the gem-isled Grecian seas
It crept with its shadows cool,
Hiding the argosies.

Cæsar its coming knew
Where, by his camp-fire's light,
He dreamed of his far-off Rome
And the steps that lead to might.

Over red Waterloo
It laid the shroud of peace,
Cooling the parching lips,
Bringing with death surcease.

Centuries now have gone —
Still do we watch it come,
Touching the heart with peace
Till railing lips are dumb.

Here do I welcome it,
As countless men have done;
Ages have come and passed,
But night makes mankind one!

REQUIEM

THE ships come in from the sea,
And the tide moves inwardly;
The wild bird seeks its nest,
And the heart its rest.

The winds that ranged the hills
And sang with stars and rills,
From mirth and music cease,
And the heart finds peace.

On paths that backward turn,
Where home lights softly burn,
Feet haste, no more to roam,—
And the heart goes home.

THE WATCHER

WHEN Joy has left the gray, deserted rooms,
When Friendship, Trust, and Dreams for-
e'er depart,
Still through the day from dawn to twilight
glooms,
Hope watches by the window of the heart!

EXILES

THE homeland hills are dreaming
Beneath the moon's white beaming,
And the river murmurs seaward quietly;
We can hear the wood-winds calling,
Watch the dark tree-shadows falling,
The meadow dampness rising mistily.

Many miles between us lying
Mock our eager homeward sighing,
Where we sit alone within the dusk and dream;
Think in fancy lights are burning
Just to welcome our returning,
Make believe that they are real, not what they
 seem.

We who exiles are may wander,
But our hearts grow ever fonder
Of the old home ways and each familiar scene;
Memories of love still bind us,
Speeding seasons ever find us,
With hope of our returning ever green.

When the toil of day is ended,
And the golden moon ascended,
Our thoughts go back to homeland hills once
 more;

Up the path we hasten lightly
Where the home lights beckon brightly,
And we dream our loved ones greet us at the
door.

THE LOWLY PLEDGE

THERE is no song I would not sing for thee,
Were magic mine to weave the melody.

There is no deed I would not do for thee,
If thine, and thine alone, the fame might be.

There is no death I would not die for thee,
If dying, thine were immortality.

Yet as no song nor deed nor death may be
The gift my love can offer unto thee,

This may I do: in small ways faithfully
Till life is done, serve and be true to thee!

A TWILIGHT PLEA

HUSH thy music, wind of evening;
Lay thy silver harp aside;
Let the golden notes, long lingering,
Drift to peace at eventide.

Song is sweet, but rest is sweeter,
When the heart is full with dreams,
And the thoughts on still paths wander
Down to immemorial streams.

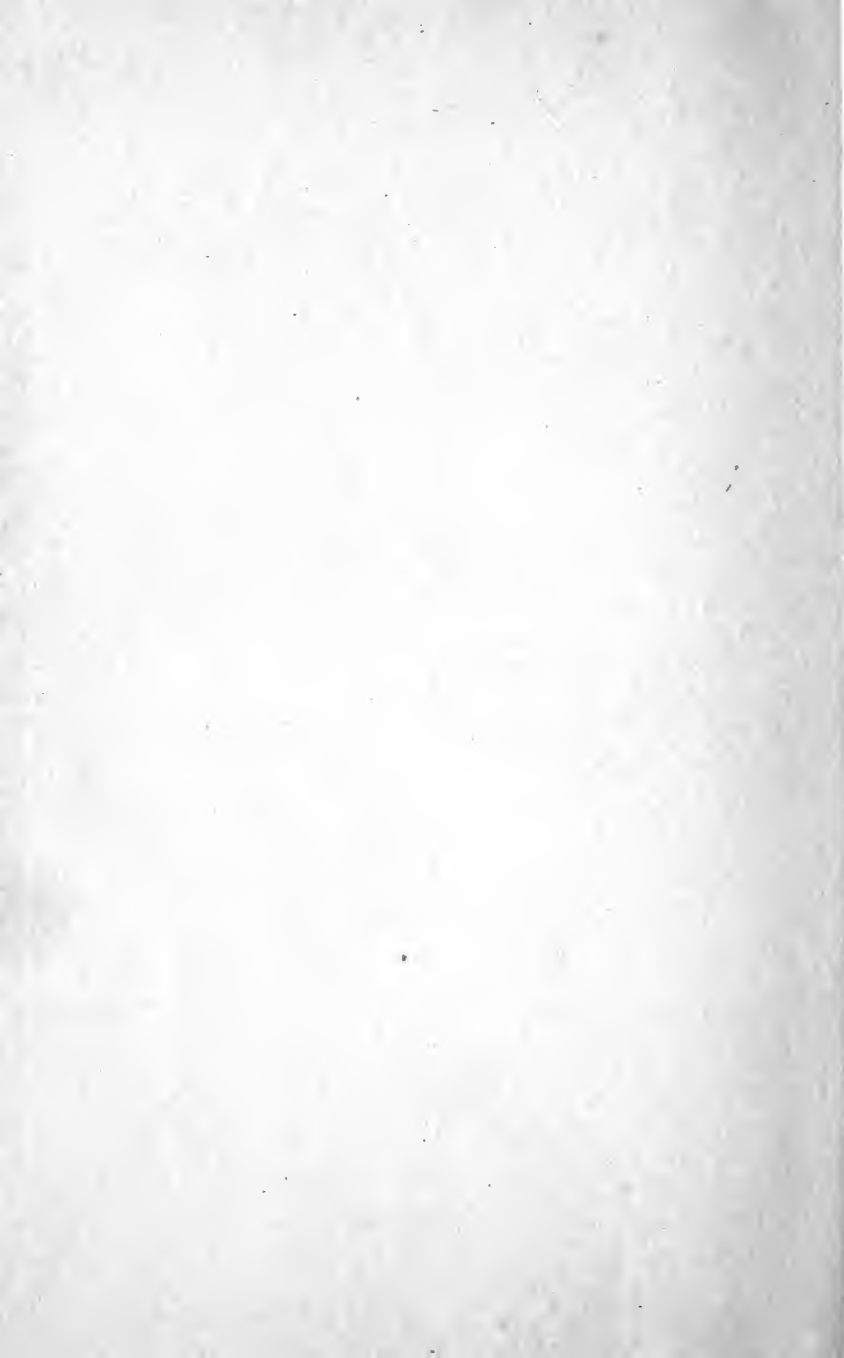
Touch the murmuring strings no longer,
Lest the mellow tones awake
Ghosts of vanished sighs and laughter,
Bring once more some old heartache.

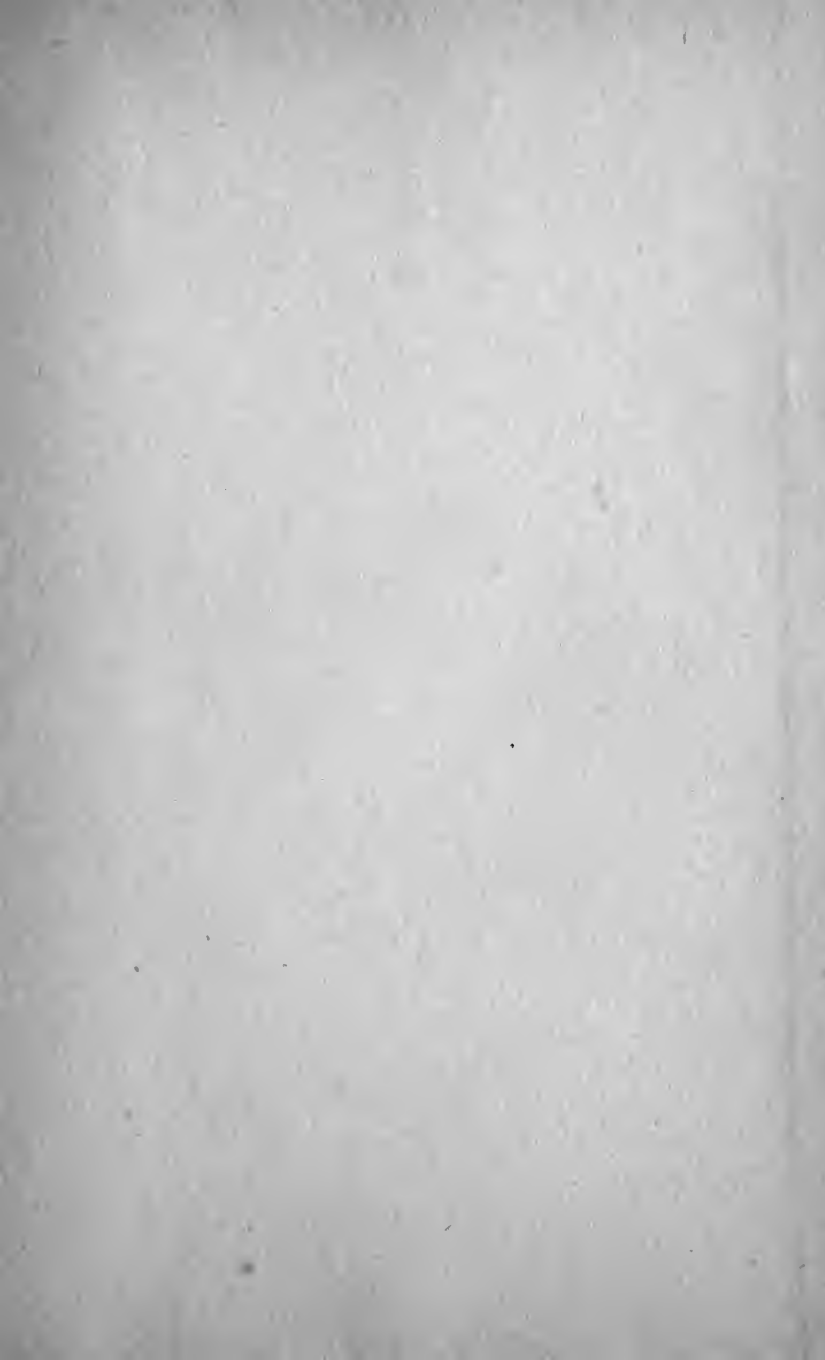
Hush thy music, wind of evening!
Let thy thrumming fingers cease;
Twilight comes, our hearts are weary —
Nothing would we ask save peace.

SONG'S END

THINK not that song must end, and peace be all,
In the wide meadows of eternity;
The lyric brooks that heed the ocean's call
But join its vast, unending symphony!











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